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WEDNESDAY
AUGUST 12, 1953

Another clear, hot day.

Hervé Alphand came to see me this morning. Georges Bidault has said nothing to him about his probable participation in the conference on the political community which is to take place in Rome. Alphand now contemplates taking a vacation and returning after the German elections.

Stewart Alsop called and we resumed our conversation of last night. He is [redacted] disturbed over the unreliability of France as a partner and says [redacted] feeling in the United States, especially in Congress, reflects a disbelief in the ahility of the French to play the part of even a quasi-great power. We talked about Indo-China, protection of the United States against Soviet aerial attacks, and a variety of subjects.

The Joyces, Charlie Blackwells, Bettina Ballard, Alfred Jaretskis and others lunched with us at Rue Alfred Dehodencq.

E. finished this afternoon her article for Town and Country on Versailles, and sent it off via Margaret Biddle on the Air France plane tonight for New York. I think it is excellently written, full of imagination and attractive in style, as is all she writes.

Tonight E., Audrey and I went to dinner at a sidewalk café on the great square of the Chateau of Versailles. For a simple meal we paid about $15, which exemplifies, though in an exaggerated degree, the high cost of food in France.

The strikes show no signs of abatement — in fact they will be more extensive tomorrow. They are an indication of the deep social malaise that afflicts this unhappy country. French prestige abroad, already [redacted] low as a result of years of governmental weakness, is sinking into the quicksilver of foreign derision and criticism. The population as a whole still appears to be

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apathetic and indifferent to the gravity of the situation. Many tourists are stranded without mail or money, ordinary banking and commercial transactions, delivery of fish, meat, vegetables and other supplies are greatly curtailed, losses in the export trade are considerable, and the economy of the country is half-paralyzed.

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